

THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



SYDNEY ARCHDALE AND CONSTANCE DELAMERE.

1776.

A TALE OF THE AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

BY FRANCES BROWNE.

CHAPTER I.—THE STOLEN TRYST.

IT has come and gone a hundred times since the period of our story—that beautiful, though fading, season of soft, still air and mellowed sunshine—the Sabbath of the Western year,—which comes when the fervid heat is over and the harvest work

is done, and is known now, as it was then, throughout the Northern States of the American Union, as the Indian summer, because, according to the red man's faith, it prevailed for ever in the happy hunting ground to which his dead were gone. Its dreamy quiet rested on the hills and valleys of the land, on the great rivers and the grand old woods, whose wealth of foliage had turned from green to gold; but quiet there was none in the hearts and homes of men, for the days of discord and division that

No. 1253.—JANUARY 1, 1876.

A

PRICE ONE PENNY.

were to end in a nation's birth, the hot dispute between England and her American colonies that was to be cooled only in blood, had begun. From the Atlantic ports to the backwood settlements, from the falls of the St. Lawrence to the flats of the Mississippi, town and country, pulpit and press, were occupied with the same subjects—the rights of the colonies, and the inroads made upon them by England's King and Parliament. They were discussed in public meetings and social gatherings, in places of business, in farm-fields, and at family firesides, but not without the contention and confusion which attend every great movement among mankind.

While the great majority of the American people were agreed on maintaining their rights and liberties at all hazards, there was an ultra-royalist minority no less devoted to the prerogatives of the Crown and the authority of Parliament. Hence the party names of Whig and Tory, and the party strife which had so long accompanied them in the old country, came into full operation on the shores of the new world; but there the names took a more practical significance, and the strife a more determined character, from the nature of the questions at issue, and their direct bearing not only on the public spirit, but the domestic interests of the land. On these accounts the controversy cut deep into private life; it estranged old neighbours, it divided friends and kinsmen, and crossed alike the prudently-laid plans of age, and the fair, fond dreams of youth.

Was it owing to some such dream that in an afternoon of that sweet Indian summer, on a thickly-wooded slope where the range of the Holyoke Mountains overlook the windings of the beautiful Connecticut River, a young girl sat on the moss-grown root of an old tree, and a young man stood leaning against its trunk by her side?

That young man had not completed his twenty-first year, but a finer specimen of early manhood was not to be found in the New England States. Tall and well proportioned, though somewhat spare, his frame promised the union of activity and strength; his face, one of the handsomest of the Anglo-Saxon type, had taken a tinge of brown, from exposure to sun and wind, which made him look beyond his years, and accorded well with its habitual expression of energy and intelligence, so characteristic of his New England kin. A country-born man, his manner and bearing had in them the freedom of the forest land, and the independence of a race able and willing to make their own way in the world, but they had also the graceful dignity and polished ease which good taste and good breeding alone can impart. His costume would have been thought considerably out of rule among the bewigged, bepowdered, and beruffled men of the period in London or Paris. Besides his own dark brown hair, worn in short tangled curls of nature's dressing, it consisted of a suit of coarse grey cloth, such as women spun and men wove in country cottage and farm-house, stockings, then a largely displayed portion of man's attire, knitted of linen thread beside New England hearths, and shoes of home-tanned leather without buckle or rosette. For he belonged to the Homespun Association—a society whose members were pledged to wear nothing that paid duty to the taxing government of England, and therefore had to eschew all imported goods.

So apparently did the girl by whose side he stood beneath the branching boughs; her kersey dress and straw hat, with linen ribbons, told as much, but their

rustic simplicity only served to set off her surpassing beauty. In the last of her teens, and about the middle height of woman, her figure would have seemed too slender but for the rounded elegance of its symmetry; a poet would have said that the rose and lily strove for dominion in her face; a sculptor would have rejoiced in the classic mould of her features, and many a modern belle might have envied the rich abundance of her chestnut hair. These were charms which time could steal and care destroy, but her fair face spoke of that over which they had no power—a mind at once noble and tender, gentle and steadfast, a woman on whose faith and constancy one might rely under any circumstances, but whose love only a brave, good man could win.

"You must give me a better answer than that, Constance," said the young man by her side; "I have played the game of fish for nothing long enough for any man in his senses; maybe I am not quite in mine where you are concerned; but here have I been thinking of nobody but you this many a year, for I have loved you as long as I can remember, ay, since we were children playing in the meadows and going to school together; and the boys used to laugh at me for following wherever you went. We are both old enough now to know our own minds, yet there is no engagement between us, no promise—at least, on your side; you could let me slip to-morrow and marry somebody else with perfect propriety, as the old maids say. Maybe that is what you mean to do after all, but somehow I don't think it—no, I don't, Constance, dear," he continued, catching the reproachful look she cast up into his face. "But I can't drift loose about you any longer; let me have something to hope for and hold by, now that things are so uncertain around us. Say you will, on my own, this year, next year, any time you please to fix, only let it be a settled thing, and I will wait as patiently and faithfully as ever Jacob did for his Rachel. I wish Mr. Delamere would be good enough to take old Laban's way, as there happens to be no Leah in the case."

He sat down beside her on the mossy root, and took her small white hand between his two; it nestled confidently there, but her head drooped low, and her eyes were cast on the ground as she said: "I can make no engagement without my father's consent, and that he will never give while you hold what he calls your rebellious principles. Indeed, if he knew the half that people say about you, he would never consent to see or speak to you. Sydney, is it all true?"

"Is what true, my own Constance?"

"That you are captain of the Minute Men; that you drill companies of students secretly every night; and that there is a warrant out against you for assaulting Government officers in the discharge of their duty."

"Yes, it is all true enough, my girl; the young men of our university and neighbourhood who have pledged themselves to be ready at a minute's warning to rise in arms for the defence of their country's rights and liberties, have done me the honour to elect me their captain, though they might have found worthier and abler men; and as I have picked up some knowledge of the military exercise from my own good father, I teach it to my fellow-students who have not had the same opportunities. As to the warrant, it was that made me ask you to meet me here, for I don't care to be seen at home, lest it

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might compromise my father, and I meant to tell you all about it; but my foolish heart's business rose to my lips when I caught the first sight of you coming through the trees. Well then, I was going home to my lodgings from the last of our college classes one evening last week, and chanced to pass a house on the outskirts of Cambridge, occupied by a widow and her two daughters—old girls they are now, and not over well provided for, but the husband and father was colonel of the Massachusetts volunteers, and did good service in the old war, as well as your father and mine. I noticed that something was wrong about the place, and soon found out that a party of revenue men had forced an entrance, because a spy of theirs told them that the poor souls had bought some Irish linen from a pedlar whose goods never passed the Custom House; and there they were, searching and frightening the unprotected women almost out of their wits. Of course they had the tyrant's law on their side; but I could not see the widow and daughters of a brave officer who had defended our frontiers against the French and Indians before I was born insulted by British underlings; so I just started off, got together a company of my Minute Men, turned the searching party right out of the house, and chased them home to their quarters, with some smart promises of what they might expect if we ever caught them disturbing an honest man's house again. It was after dark, you see, and between that and their terrors the rascals could swear to none of the company but myself; so the rest have fortunately escaped, and a warrant has been issued against me as the ringleader. I hear they mean to make an example of me; but never mind, Constance, it will soon blow over, for things must come to better or worse. In the meantime, I am keeping out of sight with old Vanderslock, the Dutch lumber-man, you know," and he pointed far up the wooded hill. "No fear of British spies venturing so high as his domain; and between my boy, Cæsar, and your page, Philip, we can exchange messages and see each other at times, that is, if the fair Constance does not think the less of her own true man for loving justice and liberty almost as well as he loves herself."

"You know me better than that, Sydney. I think more of you now than I ever did. If they had issued a hundred warrants against you, it was a brave, good action to protect the widow's home."

There was a look of loving pride in her flushed cheek and kindling eye—pride of him and his doings—that charmed the young man out of his sobriety.

"Spoken like a New England girl, my Constance!" he cried, throwing his arm round her, and drawing her close to his manly breast—"Spoken like a New England girl! I wish the action had been ten times better and braver, since you praise it. There is nothing like praise from the woman one loves; but I will do something worthy of it yet."

"Ay, Sydney, but listen to me."

"I am content to listen to you all my life, Constance, as men must to their wives, they say."

"Well, never mind that; but tell me, is not your father right in saying that you young men go too far in opposition to the British Government, and give the enemies of our country an opportunity to misrepresent and blacken the good cause in England?"

"Constance, he is not right. I say it with all reverence to my father, for which no son has better reason, he and the rest of the moderate party think that by calmly and prudently setting forth the

grievances of the land, our British rulers will be induced to do us justice; but they are deceived. The foxes of the old country are too crafty for them. Craft and tyranny always go together. They mean to play fast and loose with us, and gain time, till they get the arms out of our hands and garrisons into all our towns and strong places, and then govern us like so many slaves. We, the descendants of men who for freedom's sake came out from kin and country, and braved the perils of wave and wilderness that they might leave a heritage of liberty and religion to their children; we, that have in our veins the best blood of Saxon and Norman—yes, Constance, it was the best men of either race that sought these western shores, and left the residue, fit only to be governed by the licentious, mean, and tyrannical Stuarts, and the stultified House of Hanover."

How much farther the young student would have gone in this high-pitched strain of his age and party, it were hard to say; but Constance laid her small fingers on his lips with, "Stop! stop! Sydney dear; you don't know who may be walking in these woods. It is a mercy that my father never climbs so high. At any rate, he is engaged to-day with a parcel of books he gets every season from England, so I hope he won't miss me. What he would say if he knew I was here, or heard you just now, it frightens me to think of. He would call it treason at the very least."

"Maybe he would, Constance; but it is treason against ourselves, our country, and the memory of our forefathers, to live under the laws those old bunglers on the other side of the Atlantic have made for us—laws that dwarf our commerce, check our spirit of enterprise, and furnish every spiteful or insolent exciseman with a pretext for invading our domestic privacy and ransacking our houses. However, there is one comfort, their meddling tyranny cannot last long. Let slow or timid men say as they will, there is a spirit in the new generation that will strike for freedom some day, and the Minute Men won't be the last in the field."

"Sydney, Sydney, think of the risk!"

"Who regards risk for a good cause, when his heart is in it? I love my country even as I love you. What danger should deter me from standing on the defence of either? Nay, Constance, it was yourself that first made me a patriot, as far as I deserve the name. I remember long ago, when we read the histories of the Greek and Roman heroes and the tales of the Swiss patriots together in our old summer-house, how your eyes used to kindle, and your breast heave with emotion, as you said, 'Such men had a right to be loved and honoured.' It was those readings and sayings that bound me to the service of liberty and land. Would you bid me quit it now, when it bids fair to need every true man's arm?"

"No, Sydney, no;" and the young girl's face was lighted up once more with the glow of that early enthusiasm. "I love my country as well as you; I think I could die for it, woman though I am, and the daughter of an arrant old Tory, as your Minute Men would call my dear and kindly father; but"—and the light waned away from eye and cheek—"besides fearing all sorts of snares and dangers into which your hot haste might bring you, I have a suspicion that your devotion to liberty and land will some day make you forget your old playmate, Constance, and take to a more eligible girl, with a sturdy Whig for her father."

"You are jesting with me, my girl, as you did many a time before; but things should be serious with us now. Is it not far more likely that some Royalist officer, all fashion and finery, from his lace ruffles to his diamond shoe-buckles, with principles your father approves, and a noble connection somewhere in England, will send poor plain Sydney Archdale out of sight and out of mind? Don't look so displeased, Constance; I was not quite in earnest; but situated as I am, it is natural to fear something of the kind; that is why I want a bit of a promise from you. If we were once engaged, I don't believe your father would part us. Give me your hand, and say you'll be mine."

"I cannot say it without his consent," she said, withdrawing herself a little as she spoke; "and it would be deceiving you if I let you imagine there was any hope of that. My father grows fiercer against the Whigs every day. Sometimes I fear his mind is getting unhinged on the subject, he gives way to such bursts of temper; but those who know him best say he has never been the same man since my poor brother met his fate. That is another bond on me, Sydney, another reason why I should be the comfort and support of his old age. It is creeping fast upon him, and I am his only child, named after my mother, whose grave he visits on the last day of every June—the one on which she was taken from him years before I can remember. Since then he has been father and mother both to me. Never was so much love and care bestowed upon a daughter from the time when he hushed me in his arms to sleep in stormy nights and taught me to say an evening prayer beside my little bed. It has been his constant habit to gratify my wishes and ward off from me every cause of trouble or annoyance. Sydney, I cannot, I will not disobey him."

"Well, I don't ask you to do that," said the young man, calmly; but a painful expression passed over his face; "only listen. My father means to call at the Elms to-day and sound Mr. Delamere; he may know nothing about the warrant. I am at Harvard College, you know."

"Yes; studying under the lumber-man," said Constance; but as she spoke the pair started to their feet, for a sound resembling nothing but that of a horse's hoofs on the hard upland turf seemed to pass just behind the tree on whose mossy root they had been sitting.

They looked around on all sides, but could see nothing, except the squirrels climbing up the boughs, and the wood-birds and insects flitting about in the quiet air.

"There is a horseman somewhere in our neighbourhood," said Sydney. "One would not expect to see the like in these thick woods; but some travellers may have taken them for a short cut across the mountains, and to my certain knowledge the soil hereabouts has a singular power of conveying sound."

"Might it not be a mounted spy in search of you? Oh, Sydney, fly back to Vanderslock's clearing; and there is Philip's signal," said Constance, as a shrill whistle came up the slope. "Either he sees somebody coming, or it is time for me to go. I came here to gather the last of the blue-berries; what excuses one learns to make by dealing with Minute Men. Philip and Caesar are gathering them for me, to make good the excuse. But good-bye; I must go now."

She was darting away, for the shrill whistle

sounded once more, but Sydney caught her by the hand. "You can't go without making me that promise," he cried; "say before we part that you will be my wife."

"I will if my father consents to it; that is the only condition. For your own sake, for my sake, go," said Constance.

He pressed her hand to his lips, and fled up the slope with the speed of a mountain deer, while she turned downwards at almost an equal pace.

TIMES AND SEASONS.

I WRITE in a mild day of winter, when coming frosts have heralded the armies of the later cold by some sharp stray nights that have smitten the latest of the autumn leaves. It is sunset, and I am sitting in the parlour of an old-fashioned country house that looks upon a level lawn. On one side are large trees—horse-chestnut, lime, and beech. From these a golden shower of leaves comes sloping down upon the lawn, as the gentlest breeze cannot now bend their stems without breaking them off. For leaves to flutter now is death. But they are more beautiful in death than in the full blood of summer strength. And the golden shower has spotted the green grass with a thousand dots of yellow, brown, and red, that shine like gems in the sunshine. They suit the scene, the day, the place.

Of course it is all right in one aspect, and betrays a certain amount of the sense of tidiness for the gardener and his assistant to sweep away these leaves at once. To his eye they are mere litter. He does not perceive the propriety of their presence as a witness to the fitness of times and seasons. He is spoiling the beauty of the view as I write. He has spoilt it. His notion of order somehow impresses me with a sentiment of disorder. With long stretched curves and sweeps of his broom he has laid bare a patch of grass, which harmonises ill with the rich decay of vegetation that is going on all around. The empty beds, which a few months ago were bright with flowers, look infinitely more naked and desolate now that they alone break the dead level of dull green which the barren lawn exhibits. I like to see Mother Earth take again to her breast the life which she has sent up from her stores to clothe the trees in their summer dress. And though there are periods in her processes which seem simply bleak and desolate, now she would break the loss of colour which the flowers shed by that shown in the dying leaves. The lawn needed some ornament. The day had come when for some four months it could not serve as a carpet on which to sit and rest. One of its chief specialities, as a floor whose ceiling was the sky, an outdoor parlour to the quiet house, on which little children might crawl and play, has ceased. There is small use in sweeping it as rooms are swept. It is severed from the life of the household till summer comes again. It loses its domestic character. It takes its place with the fields around. When neatly swept it seems to offer what it cannot give. Let it not only join in bearing witness to the dying year, but let it show—as no place like a smooth, green lawn can show—the stores of colour in the fallen leaves. Maybe, before very long, it will be plainly needful to sweep them off. They will have become too

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dead. They will have fulfilled their mission as witnesses of departed summer. When the boughs, branches, and twigs of the trees are all bare, their presence will be out of season, and they will be best out of sight. Other flakes fall upon the lawn; the air-born crystals of the snow ever bring their seasonable beauty, but it distresses me with a sense of importunate peremptoriness to see the last golden leaves pounced upon as fast as they come to atone for the departed colours of the flowers.

And I am not sure whether the sight of their immediate and industrious removal does not suggest a suspicion that the sweepers take the broom in hand partly to exhibit a phase of industry which is not laborious. It is easy work, sweeping leaves; and any one owning a lawn knows well that much other work is starved in order that the lawn may be swept. Do what he will, he cannot long resent or hinder the persuasion that a man is well employed who spends a large part of day after day in keeping the grass clear.

But be that as it may, the sight of the sweeper has set me off thinking how little we sometimes appreciate the message of the times and seasons. How very short a way can we pursue this thought in these few lines. The fact is that a due perception of the season is being incessantly demanded. We live in a world and time of change; and yet habit, which is soon created, being the act of yesterday, is ever fixing us in one frame of thought and mode of action. The new time, the new opportunities, come and go while we are still dwelling on the old; or we get, as a sailor would put it, so much way upon us that, though the seasons veer round, we keep straight on long before we turn, and then often turn too late. We don't keep up to the mark of the shifting experience and demands of life. It is a truism to say that fitness and the use of opportunity, or the proper season, makes all the difference as to the value of an act. It is too late to sow wheat when the summer has begun; it is too late to reap the crop when the corn has been left to sprout in the ear. True, the imperative necessities of food and money cause few to miss the proper seasons for the actual seed-time and harvest of the field. But in countless other ways, moral or intellectual, seasons are let slip, and we seek in vain to overtake them. The seed-time of life is often thus missed and wasted, and as there is only one life here, of which the latter half or later part is virtually the chief harvest of a man in the world, a missing of this precious seed-time is final. I do not refer to gross neglect, I am not thinking of the crop of wild weeds which the young man sometimes carelessly scatters the seed of in the soil of his life. I refer rather to the mere commonplace indolence or carelessness which lets the receptive years slip by till the boy has passed into the man, and the world catches him, and puts him into harness, which in most cases he must wear to the end. Once let the seed-time of study, the years in which instruction can be received, be ill-used, and they are comparatively few who can make up for this neglect. There is a power of receptivity or apprehension peculiar to youth. When youth passes this grows dim or stiff, or the faculty which was receptive while young takes another shape, and is employed in the discharge of the importunate duties of a responsible post. Till that post has to be filled, such mental abilities as the youth possesses are available solely for the acquisition of knowledge.

He knows really nothing of the distracting burden and obligations of life. He is like a ship getting ready for sea, but as yet neither furnished nor launched. The day will come when he will be launched, and it will depend upon his equipment and provisions whether he will be a mere commonplace vessel or not. As he stores and fits his ship now, so will he sail his course.

How many committed to their course, and finding such and such demands made upon them, or such and such opportunities open, look with anxiety upon what they possess in the way of information, skill, and ability. How many a one finds a desirable career closed, or a work he would have liked to do denied to him, by reason of his poor equipment. It is not that he was while young incapable of taking in a proper store. He simply idled while his ship was waiting to be launched. He took in just as little as he could, content to fulfil only the barest demands of his instructors. He cared more, maybe, for excellence in athletics than for skill at "those stupid books." But unfortunately for him the demands of after-life are for knowledge in book-keeping, languages, history, science. He may be able to jump and run to perfection, but there are few openings in the world of men for a mere athlete. He has let the season pass in which he might have fitted himself for not only useful but highly esteemed work. He sees men, with perhaps less energy and natural ability than himself, pass him by as careers open or opportunities arrive, simply because while young they made themselves masters of some dull-seeming technical processes which the work of the world requires the worker to be well grounded in.

Thus, after a very serious and manifold manner, we see hundreds wholly miss the value of times and seasons. These come imperatively round, and cannot be recalled.

Besides the great and tiresome failures in later life from neglect to use the earlier part of it aright, we easily see that in the common current and discharge of duty men are constantly missing chances, as we call them. They let that invaluable moment go by while the game is within range. The success of many is determined by their appreciation of minutes and hours and days. With, it maybe, good sense, good judgment, and ability, the nice nick of time is let slip by which what they might have done is left undone; and being not done then, their power to have done the thing is lost or wasted. The largest and the least opportunities are thus let go. Unless the whale is harpooned while at the surface, the ship may come home empty of oil. Unless the mosquito be slapped the moment it alights on the back of your hand, you may be teased with an itching lump for a week.

So in all things. All the difference arises from missing the moment of action, from failing to see how the appreciation of times and seasons reaches to the smallest details of life, as well as its more important crises. Had the leaders and managers of the expensive expeditions sent out to observe the transit of Venus been a quarter-of-an-hour behindhand in the handling of their implements, the world of science would have received blank records from the four quarters of the globe. We are, however, though set to take no close astronomical observations, ever set in the midst of a code of imperative laws, which can be used only as we observe times and seasons. So true is this fact that it often ceases to

impress us. It is too familiar to be noticed by many; but it decides between the right and wrong way of doing what has to be done; it gives judgment irretrievably between success and failure, impotence and power.

We are, probably, thinking somewhat now of of times and seasons. We are especially conscious of the lapse of opportunity. We are inclined to moralise about good resolutions. Resolve to recollect and act upon the truth that throughout all life almost everything depends upon the perceiving and doing, not only the right thing, but the right thing at the right time. That is a cardinal resolution to realise. Take in that, and then not only is the later half of life well used, but the life of each day and month and year fits in along with the manifold law which rules the world of God.

KINGS WITHOUT CROWNS.

THE death of the Austrian ex-Emperor, Ferdinand, last summer, brought to a close another chapter in the interesting record of "monarchs retired from business."

The story of these uncrowned kings told in detail would bring before us some of the most thrilling and momentous events in history, and in many cases, too, would present to us scenes as pathetic and perhaps as romantic as anything to be found in the pages of fiction. All ages of the world and all countries have afforded instances of such retirements, and equally diversified have been the circumstances and the motives that have brought them about. In America we have the presidents—monarchs to all intents and purposes—laying down their authority at the end of their "term," in simple fulfilment of the condition upon which they took it up, just as the consuls and dictators had to do in the ancient republics; and what they do in simple compliance with constitutional requirements, we find that here and there in the course of history other wielders of imperial power have done, apparently, from sheer distaste for its burdens and responsibilities, its publicity, its pomp and parade, and in honest preference for a quiet, simple life. "Cincinnatus at the plough" has become a proverb. Attalus, King of Pergamus, is said to have given up his throne in order that he might devote himself uninterruptedly to his garden—a source from which Dioecletian, according to some authorities, derived the greatest happiness of his life, though he had ruled with absolute sway over the whole civilised world. History tells us of one king who voluntarily abdicated his throne and devoted the rest of his days to the service of a monastery in the capacity of miller, until a soliloquy, in which he was overheard indulging, revealed his rank and led to his becoming a priest and a martyr. Another, a king of Poland, mentioned by Dr. Doran in his book upon this subject,* laid down his sceptre and firmly refused to resume it, though, it is said, reduced to the necessity of earning a living as a market porter. He had, he said, since he turned porter, carried nothing so heavy as the burden of royalty. He had slept more in four nights than all the time he was king—had good health and

appetite, no anxieties, was king of himself, and did not care a doit who was King of Poland.

Many instances are recorded of kings descending to menial occupations, to trades, or to commercial pursuits, although not often entirely from preference, as in the case of this unpatriotic philosopher of Poland. King John of France, while a prisoner in the Savoy, appears to have driven a very respectable wine trade. Elesbaan, King of the Ascumite Ethiopians, became a kind of scavenger. The German monarch, Henry iv, was reduced to such extremities after vacating his throne, that he sold his boots to buy bread, and afterwards made humble supplication to the Bishop of Spiers to be appointed a lay prebend, pleading—though pleading vainly to the proud and pitiless ecclesiastic—his ability to sing, in support of his request. Ancient history affords a very striking instance of fallen majesty in the person of Dionysius, the Syracusan. In his involuntary exile this inhuman monster was reduced to the necessity of earning his living as a schoolmaster, a barber, and finally as a sort of mortgage collector of money for the priests.

But of all uncrowned monarchs whose biographies have been embodied in history, none, perhaps, have cut a more deplorable figure than the Roman Valerian who fell into the hands of the Persians by the treachery of his bosom friend. After a life of the most abject misery and degradation, in the course of which he was habitually employed as a stepping-stone to enable his savage captor to mount his horse, and was dragged about the country decked out in his kingly robes till they hung about him in rags and tatters, he was put to death. Even then his humiliation can hardly be considered to have ended, for his body was flayed, and the skin, after being stuffed and painted red, was hung up in one of the temples to be gazed at by sight-seers, and to be employed occasionally, to suggest to his countrymen humility in their dealings with the Persians.

We have upon record at least one or two instances of monarchs relinquishing their crowns for love. William Frederick, King of Holland, was one of these. At the age of sixty-eight, finding himself a widower and desperately in love, he resolved to take a second wife. His subjects, however, objected to the lady of his choice, and the amorous king, finding that he must really relinquish his *fiancée* or his crown, promptly decided that it should be the latter, and in October, 1840, issued a proclamation, in which, of course, the lady does not appear, but over which the prosaic Dutchmen made quite as merry as though she had. The king merely says that: "After the most serious reflection, we have considered this the most fitting period for carrying into execution our long contemplated purpose of passing the remaining days which God may please to grant us, in repose and freedom from the cares of government, under a grateful recollection of all the benefits that His kindness and wisdom have conferred upon us"—all of it, of course, very excellent sentiment in a man verging on three-score years and ten; but yet, the Hollanders thought, not precisely conveying the idea of an enthusiastic lover about to get married, and very reluctantly abdicating his throne in order to do so. Shortly after this proclamation, the venerable monarch married privately, lived in very happy retirement for two or three years, and then died suddenly, leaving behind him a fortune amounting, it is said, to several millions sterling.

* "Monarchs Retired from Business." By Dr. Doran.

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Although it is undeniable that King William Frederick would gladly have retained his crown, yet he is entitled to have his name enrolled among monarchs whose retirement has been quite voluntary. The number of these is very small, and if the whole truth were known, it would probably prove to be still smaller than it appears to be. The abdication of the Roman Emperor Diocletian affords an illustration that may probably be regarded as representative of many others. Ostensibly the act was voluntary, and historians have often spoken in terms of something like wondering admiration of the man who deliberately divested himself of supreme and absolute power, and retired from the pomp and splendour of Imperial Rome, when Rome was the mistress of the world, into what has been represented to be the obscurity of a simple country squire. The scene and the circumstances attending his abdication were certainly very impressive. The Roman armies are drawn up upon a vast plain, in the centre of which a gorgeous throne blazes beneath a clear Italian sky, and upon this the retiring potentate, clad in the purple mantle, the symbol of imperial power, is seated, surrounded by the great officers of state and the generals of his armies. And now the emperor rises, and the vast throng of the populace and the soldiery, stretching around him far beyond the reach of his voice, is hushed into silence. He delivers an appropriate and touching speech—some say with tears rolling down his face—and then he strips off his mantle, and lays down his sword and his wreath. He is emperor no longer. Still amid a profound silence he descends from his throne, steps into his chariot, and is driven off the scene upon which he entered as a slave and the son of a slave, but upon which, for many years he had been the mightiest of living men.

There is something very impressive in the spectacle of a man thus stepping down from so lofty a pinnacle of greatness and power; but in the case of Diocletian there seems to have been nothing worthy of the admiration that this act of his has received. The truth, according to some very respectable authorities, appears to be that in thus laying down his sceptre, he was but yielding to a force as irresistible as that which drove Napoleon to St. Helena or led Charles I to the scaffold. Nor does his case seem to call for any great amount of pity. He exchanged a perilous throne for a retreat comparatively safe and supremely luxurious. The palace at Solona, in which this "simple country squire" spent the last few years of his life, is described by Constantine as the most magnificent he had ever beheld. With its theatres and its temples, its baths and picture galleries, it occupied ten acres of land in the midst of fertile plains and shady groves, gorgeous flower-gardens, and streams and fountains. There is something decidedly grotesque in the story which represents this secluded grandee growing his own vegetables. When his former colleague, Maximian, suggested that he should resume the imperial power, he "rejected the temptation with a smile of pity"—so the story goes—"calmly observing that if he could show Maximian the cabbages he had planted with his own hands at Solona he should no longer be urged to relinquish the enjoyment of happiness to the pursuit of power." Whether Maximian ever did catch a tranquillising glimpse of those cabbages, history unfortunately has not recorded. That he never actually tasted one of them seems certain, or the effect must

surely have been something so beatific that no historian could possibly have overlooked it.

Like Diocletian, the great majority of monarchs who have abdicated either in ancient or modern times have done so because they could not help it. This was the case with the ex-emperor whose death has suggested the subject of this paper.

A feeble and incompetent man, Ferdinand appears to have been the mere puppet of one of his ministers. Of himself it has been said that he never did anything in life except recognise the truth that he could do nothing when the necessity for action arose. He had the sagacity to recognise his own impotency in time to save his dynasty; and when in 1848 a great wave of revolution swept over Europe it found Ferdinand safe in the retirement of his palace at Prague, and a young and popular prince—the present Emperor of Austria—on the throne. Ferdinand no doubt acted wisely. He was unequal to his position in such stormy times, and did well to retire in favour of a stronger or fitter man.

A man who has similarly retreated has obtained credit for magnanimity and a lofty superiority to the fascinations of pomp and power, whose name, if the truth were known, history would have handed down branded with the stigma of cowardice and selfish indolence. There is nothing noble or magnanimous in the conduct of a man who resigns his greatness because greatness demands strength and effort, or who retires into seclusion from sheer love of ease and indolence. Kingly power, like wealth or talents or any other endowment, is a trust, and no man should relinquish it without an effort to retain it and to wield it for the common good. To be sure it is a great burden as well as a trust, and the man who has worthily borne the burden through the heat of the day may honourably lay it down as eventide draws on. All men are not made of such sturdy stuff as that indefatigable worker, Father Antoine Arnauld, to whom Pascal once breathed his weary aspirations for rest. "Talk not of rest, brother," said Arnauld; "we have all eternity to rest in." Like Dr. Chalmers, who was wont to express his hope that his seventh decade might be a Sabbath preparation for another world, many feel that a calm and restful termination to a busy life affords the best opportunity for a preparation for death, and here and there kings and statesmen have apparently acted on a similar sentiment.

No man ever lived who has been more lauded for such a withdrawal from the busy scenes of life than the monarch presented in our illustration, and whose abdication altogether eclipses that of the great Roman potentate whose resignation had till then been the most striking event of the kind upon record.

In the story of the abdication of Charles V, as told by the Churchmen of his day and by many partisan historians since, there is certainly much to excite the wonder and admiration of mankind. Charles was born to greatness. Sprung from a long line of illustrious ancestors, the fortunes of his house culminated in him. As a boy he was sharp and clever; as a young man, though profligate and wild, he was yet fond of manly sports, and full of energy and dauntless bravery; and in his maturer years he had the reputation of being a consummate general as well as the shrewdest politician in Europe. From his youth upwards he had been accustomed to the exercise of unlimited power, and he lived to control the destinies

of half the world, and to rule with absolute sway over an empire upon which the sun never set. It was no wonder that the world was profoundly impressed when, at the age of fifty-five, Charles announced his determination at once to lay aside his greatness and his splendour, and to retire to a cloister. He seems, indeed, to have taken particular care that the world *should* be impressed. Never since Diocletian disrobed in the presence of the Roman legions had so great a monarch laid down his sceptre in so deliberate and impressive a manner. The ceremony of abdication took place in the magnificent hall of one of the old palaces of Brussels, to which an illustrious assemblage had been invited from all parts of the emperor's wide domains.

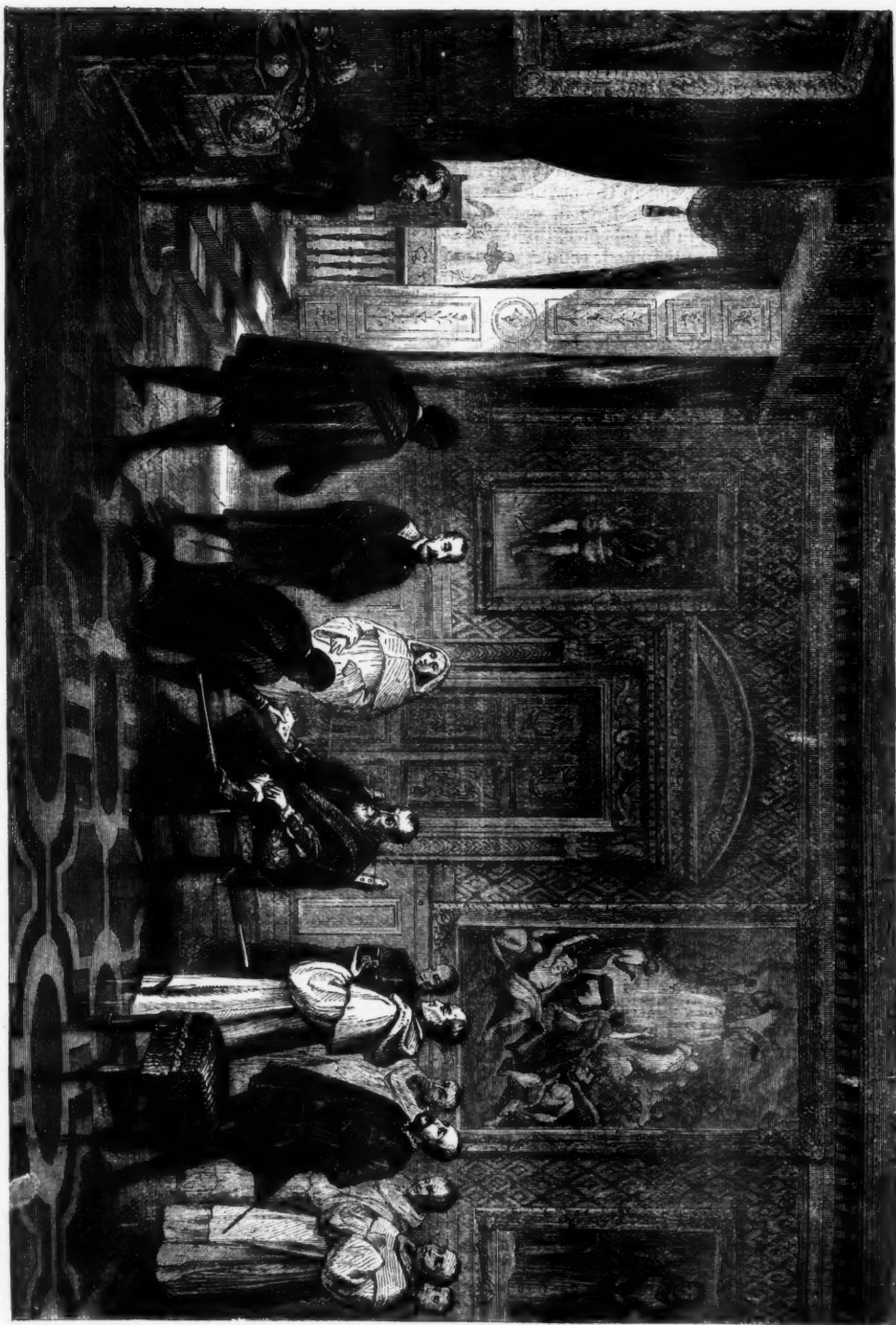
It is the 25th of October, 1555. For many hours stately halberdiers and archers have kept guard among a throng of grave magistrates, rulers of distant provinces, and executive officers clad in the splendid uniforms for which the Netherlands were famous. Three o'clock strikes at length; the door of the adjoining chapel opens and the great emperor appears, followed by a long train of bishops and cardinals, dukes and archdukes, and councillors, and governors, and gallant knights, and glittering warriors—a number sufficient to fill a great crimson dais, upon which, beneath a rich canopy, three massive gilt chairs are placed. Speeches are delivered. The prematurely aged potentate recounts his toils, his wars, and his travels, and begs to be pardoned for all his errors and offences. As a dying father, he bequeathes his magnificent empire to his son, promises to remember him and the people he is leaving in his prayers to the Almighty, and then sinks pale and exhausted upon his chair, his audience being suffused in tears, and giving vent to audible lamentations.

Charles embarked for Spain, and henceforth his panegyrists would have us regard him as a devout and humble-minded Christian, a simple cloistered monk, dead to the world, and given up wholly to the great concerns of eternity. At one time we find him castigating his own back in penitence for his sins; at another, moralising over his own folly in having spent so great a portion of his life in trying to make men think alike upon matters of religion, while, with all his efforts, he found that it was impossible to make a few watches tick together. Now we find him holding "sweet and heavenly communion" with some bald-pated brother, and now rehearsing his own funeral—joining in the burial service over his own body stretched in a coffin, the convent-chapel draped with black and lighted with innumerable tapers—so it has been asserted.

There are many anecdotes told respecting him which would go to prove that this once powerful and imperious monarch, on relinquishing his sceptre, became at once the most humble-minded and affable of men, and as poor as he was humble. No sooner had he set foot upon Spain than, we are told, he prostrated himself upon the earth, kissed it, and exclaimed, "Naked came I from my mother's womb, and naked do I return to thee, oh thou universal mother of mankind." Unfortunately, the historian who relates this fact feels it his duty to record in the very same paragraph that when the Spanish nobles came to pay court to him immediately after, he was greatly annoyed that there were so few who came, and that those who did come were not sufficiently deferential in their deportment, and that he

was provoked beyond measure at not finding a proper suite of servants and ample funds awaiting his landing. Yet Charles evidently wished to be thought a poor man. "Why do you bow to me?" asked a court jester, who chanced to be in his presence in the course of his journey to the convent at Yuste. "Because," replied the ex-emperor, "a simple courtesy is all I now have to give." We hear of his taking a lonely seat among the brethren of the convent, and at another time he even went so far as to make an attempt to dine off their humble fare. This, however, was a failure. Charles could not get through his dinner. His demeanour throughout, according to some of his biographers, affords such an impressive example of sweet condescension and Christian humility that it seems really a pity we are not allowed to enjoy this edifying spectacle undisturbed by doubts as to the reality of the conversion of this merciless persecutor, this ruthless, pitiless executioner of men, women, and children, tens of thousands of whom his edicts consigned to the horrible tortures of the Inquisition for venturing to reject the appalling blasphemies of the Roman Church in the early part of the sixteenth century. Of that very people—the Netherlands—before whom that touching drama of the 25th of October was enacted, Mr. Motley says, "The number who were burned or strangled, beheaded or buried alive, in obedience to his edicts, and for the offence of reading the Scriptures, of looking askance at a graven image, or of ridiculing the presence of the body and blood of Christ in a wafer, has been placed as high as a hundred thousand by distinguished authorities." It was he who set up the "Holy Inquisition" in the Netherlands, and by his ferocious edicts sought to stamp out the great religious movement which Luther had commenced. "This," says Mr. Motley, "was his return to the Netherlands for their wasted treasure and their constant obedience, and for this his name deserves to be handed down to eternal infamy in every land where a single heart beats for political or religious freedom." Nor is this great modern historian disposed to grant him any benefit of the usual excuse for his atrocities. "Charles was no fanatic. The man whose armies sacked Rome, who laid his sacrilegious hands on Christ's vicegerent, and kept the infallible head of the Church a prisoner to serve his own political ends, was then no bigot—he believed in nothing, save that when the course of his own imperial will was impeded, and the interests of his imperial house were in jeopardy, Pontiffs were to succumb as well as Anabaptists."

And what Charles had been upon the throne, he remained to the end of his days, all the pretty little anecdotes of him notwithstanding. "Bitter regrets that he should have kept his word with Luther, as if he had not broken faith enough to reflect upon in his retirement; stern self-reproaches for omitting to put to death, while he had him in his power, the man who had caused all the mischief of the age; fierce instructions thundered from his retreat to the Inquisition to hasten the execution of all heretics; exhortations to his son Philip that he should set himself to cutting out the root of heresy—such explosions of savage bigotry as these, alternating with exhibitions of revolting gluttony, with surfeits of sardines and omelettes, Estremadura sausages, eel pies, pickled partridges, fat capons, quince syrups, ices and flagons of Rhenish wine, relieved by copious draughts of



Joseph Nicholas Feunty.

CHARLES V AT ST. JESU.

[By permission, from Sir Richard Wallace's Collection.]

senna and rhubarb, to which his horror-stricken doctors doomed him as he ate, compose a spectacle less attractive to the imagination than the ancient portraits of the cloistered Charles." The ex-emperor, indeed, appears to have left behind him very few of his appetites and passions, and very little of his ambition. Why he should have retired, however, it is not difficult to understand. To quote Mr. Motley once more, "The earlier, and indeed the greater part of his career, had been one unbroken succession of triumphs, but the concluding portion of his reign had reversed all his previous glories. His career as a whole had been a failure. Towards all the great powers of the earth he stood, not in the attitude of a conqueror, but of a disappointed, baffled, defeated potentate." "Disappointed in his schemes, broken in his fortunes, with income anticipated, estates mortgaged, all his affairs in confusion, failing in mental powers, and with a constitution hopelessly shattered, it was time for him to retire."

It would be a profound mistake, however, to imagine that Charles became a monk, or became familiar with cloisters or cells or anything else that was not congenial to his taste. The Jeronimito convent of Yuste was situated in the most charming part of Estremadura, just remote enough to afford retirement, but not so remote as to be in any sense out of the world. Here the imperial penitent had a comparatively small but very pleasant house, fitted up and furnished with all but palatial luxuriance. "Here," says Dr. Doran, "he was among the monks, but he was not of them. There was many a poor joke about his being a 'brother,' but he was only so in jest. He never ceased to be emperor; he retained as many imperial privileges as furthered his enjoyment of life, and got luckily rid of those which did not agree with his pleasure or his health. He indulged in luxurious living, and though he laid the scourge lustily on his own back, no Churchman dared order him to do so, and he could pause whenever his loins began to ache. He was the most impetuous of penitents, and the director of his conscience was not bold enough to go beyond his pupil's own suggestions." The finest music that money could provide was performed for his enjoyment, and his bedroom was so arranged that, when unable or unwilling to leave his bed, he could yet watch the progress of the priests at the chapel altar, and listen to the music. He was fond of mechanism, and retained specially for his amusement the ingenious Italian mechanician Torriani, who by his clockwork birds, and tilting warriors, and other curious contrivances, wiled away the tedium of "cloistered" life, and terrified the fathers of the convent by displays of what they held to be diabolical power. On the whole "the cloister" seems to have suited Charles v very well indeed. The only real difficulty he encountered in becoming a monk was in the matter of fasting. Charles could not, by any exercise of resolution, comply cheerfully with the convent regulations in this respect, and indeed it must be owned that circumstances were sometimes peculiarly aggravating. He was devotedly fond of sausages of a peculiar kind, and had sent to a distant part of the country for a supply. The sausages were despatched in all haste, but only reached the imperial epicure late on Thursday night. By no efforts of theological casuistry could they be argued into fish, and Charles had to put aside the tempting delicacies for four-and-twenty hours. To become a monk was all very well; but no ex-emperor could reasonably be expected to forego sausages in

this fashion. Charles procured from Pope Julian III a "dispensation" by which he was discharged from any scruples of conscience for having broken his fast at any previous time, and was accommodated with full liberty for the time to come.

Though the state of his health precluded the possibility of his ever again taking an active part in the affairs of the nations, his interest in everything that went on in the outer world was as keen as it ever had been. No state business of any serious importance was transacted without his having been consulted, and all events of consequence were communicated to him in despatches, which he devoured with the utmost eagerness. At one period of his residence at Yuste he appears to have received almost as many eminent personages on business of state as when actually on the throne. There was indeed a strong expectation of his coming back into the arena. Into such a perilous position did his son Philip soon manage to muddle himself, that on one occasion he despatched an emissary with instructions to entreat in the most humble manner, and to urge the ex-emperor by every argument that he could think of, to come forth from his seclusion, and resume the direction of affairs. Charles, however, was by this time quite unequal to anything of the kind. His gluttonous habits and want of exercise were rapidly breaking up what remained of a fine constitution. His end was fast approaching, and he appears to have hastened it by a ghastly and fantastical piece of mummery already incidentally referred to. After celebrating masses for the souls of his mother and wife, he startled those about him by suggesting a rehearsal of the service over his own remains. The idea was, of course, pronounced a pious and laudable one, and was actually carried into effect. The convent chapel was darkened or illuminated only by the feeble glimmer of innumerable wax tapers. In the centre an imposing catafalque was erected and shrouded in black, and near this, among a throng of monks in conventual dress, priests in their surplices, and his own household all in the deepest mourning, stood Charles, shrouded in a black mantle, and holding a lighted candle in his hand. Some historians have affirmed that he listened to the solemn words of the service and the mournful dirges of the monks while lying in his coffin. Whether or not this is true seems doubtful, but that the service was actually held is unquestionable. The awful farce was concluded by Charles blowing out the candle he held, and handing it to the priests in symbol of the resignation of his soul into the hands of his Maker.

And this hideous fooling has been lauded and extolled as an indication of exemplary piety and humility—as though in a world like this there is not enough sorrow and death to wail over, as though Charles had not sacrificed to his own impious ambition lives enough for him to mourn, but he must indulge in this mummery over his own bier.

The ceremony was too much for his shattered nerves. He took to his chamber a day or two afterwards, and in about three weeks came the end of this, the most remarkable career of all monarchs who have voluntarily resigned a sceptre. A memorial-stone in the convent garden still records that, "In this holy house of St. Jerome of Yuste ended his days, he who spent the whole of them in defence of the faith and in support of justice, Charles v, Emperor, King of Spain, most Christian, invincible. He died on the 21st September, 1558." Of such egregious falsehood may even tombstones be guilty!

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OLD NURSERY RHYMES.

BY EDWARD F. RIMEAULT, LL.D.

THE vernacular rhymes of the English nursery are very interesting when viewed in a proper light. They do not, it is true, possess any literary grace, but its want is compensated for by a simplicity coming direct from nature. They are for the most part very old, and originally were designed for no higher purpose than to convey the wisdom or humours of the cottage, to soothe the murmurs of the cradle, or enliven the sports of the village green.

"Before we had national books," says the elder D'Israeli, in his "Amenities of Literature" (vol. ii. p. 37), "we had national songs. Even at a period so obscure as the days of Charlemagne there were 'most ancient songs, in which the acts and wars of the old kings were sung.' These songs, which the secretary of Charlemagne has informed us were sedulously collected by the command of that great monarch, are described by the secretary, according to his classical taste, as 'barbarous;' barbarous because they were composed in the rude vernacular language. Yet such was their lasting energy that they were, even in the eighth century, held to be 'most ancient,' so long had they dwelt in the minds of the people. The enlightened emperor had more largely comprehended their results on the genius of the nation than had the more learned and diplomatic secretary. It was an ingenious conjecture that, possibly, even these ancient songs may in some shape have come down to us in the older Northern and Teutonic romances, and the Danish, the Swedish, the Scottish, and the English popular ballads. The kindling narrative and the fiery exploits which entranced the imagination of Charlemagne, mutilated or disguised, may have framed the incidents of a romance, or been gathered up in the snatches of the old wives' tales, and finally, may have even lingered in the nursery."

In tracing the history of a few of our old nursery rhymes, the one which first demands our attention is "The Search after Fortune," which may probably be as old as the rebellious times of Richard II. The original, as found in the Donce Collection at Oxford, is as follows:—

"My father he died, I cannot tell how,
But he left me six horses to drive out my plough:
With a wimpy lo! wommy lo! Jack Straw, blazey boys!
Wimpy lo! wommy lo! wob, wob, wob."

One of the modern traditional versions runs thus:—

"My daddy is dead, but I can't tell you how,
But he left me six horses to follow the plough:
With my whim, wham, waddle ho!
Strim, stram, straddle ho!
Bubble ho, pretty boy,
Over the brow."

I sold my six horses to buy me a cow;
And wasn't that a pretty thing to follow the plough?
With my, etc.

I sold my cow to buy me a calf,
For I never made a bargain but I lost the best half:
With my, etc.

I sold my calf to buy me a cat,
To sit down before the fire to warm her little back:
With my, etc.

I sold my cat to buy me a mouse,
But she took fire in her tail, and so burnt up my house:
With my, etc."

Another old rhyme may, perhaps, refer to Joanna of Castile, who visited the court of Henry VII in the year 1506.

"I had a little nut tree, nothing would it bear
But a golden nutmeg and a silver pear;
The King of Spain's daughter came to visit me,
And all for the sake of my little nut tree."

The celebrated rhyme, "Sing a Song of Sixpence," is as old as the sixteenth century, and is quoted in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Bonduca" (Act v. sc. 2). It is probable also that Sir Toby Belch alludes to it in "Twelfth Night," when he says, "Come on, there is sixpence for you; let's have a song."

The well-known rhyme, "Three Children sliding on the Ice," dates as far back as the year 1633, and is part of a ballad preserved in the Pepysian Collection, where it is called, "The Lamentation of a Bad Market, or the Drowning of Three Children on the River Thames." The verses which form the rhyme are thus given in the old ballad:—

"Three children sliding thereabout,
Upon a place too thin,
That so at last it did fall out,
That they did all fall in.

Ye parents all, that children have,
And ye that have none yet,
Preserve your children from the grave,
And teach them at home to sit.

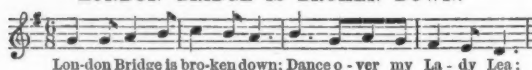
For had these at a sermon been,
Or else upon dry ground,
Why, then I never would have been seen,
If that they had been drown'd."

The ballad may also be found at length in Tom D'Urfey's celebrated collection of old songs, entitled "Pills to Purge Melancholy," 1719.

Perhaps one of the most interesting of the old nursery ditties is that beginning "London Bridge is broken down." Its date is a matter of uncertainty, for searching out the history and origin of a ballad is like endeavouring to ascertain the source and flight of December's snow; since it often comes we know not whence, is looked upon and noticed for a while, is corrupted or melts away, we know not how, and thus dies unrecorded, excepting in the oral

tradition or memory of some village crones who yet discourse of it. If one might hazard a conjecture concerning this particular rhyme, we should refer its composition to some very ancient time, when, London Bridge lying in ruins, the office of bridgemaster was vacant, and his power over the River Lea (for it is doubtless that river which is celebrated in the chorus to this song) was for a while at an end. But this is all uncertain. The rhyme is printed in Ritson's "Gammer Gurton's Garland," and in Halliwell's "Nursery Rhymes of England," but both copies are very imperfect. There are also some fragments preserved in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for September, 1823, and in the "Mirror" for November of the same year. From these copies the following version has been made up, but the whole ballad has probably been formed by many fresh additions in a long series of years, and is, perhaps, almost interminable when received in all its different versions :—

LONDON BRIDGE IS BROKEN DOWN.



Lon-don Bridge is bro-ken down; Dance o-ver my La-dy Lea;



Lon-don Bridge is bro-ken down, With a gay la-die.

"How shall we build it up again?
Dance, etc.

What shall we build it up withal?
Dance, etc.

Build it up with iron and steel;
Dance, etc.

Iron and steel will bend and bow;
Dance, etc.

Build it up with wood and clay;
Dance, etc.

Wood and clay will wash away;
Dance, etc.

Build it up with silver and gold;
Dance, etc.

Silver and gold will be stolen away;
Dance, etc.

Then we must set a man to watch;
Dance, etc.

Suppose the man should fall asleep?
Dance, etc.

Then we must put a pipe in his mouth;
Dance, etc.

Suppose the pipe should fall and break?
Dance, etc.

Then we must set a dog to watch;
Dance, etc.

Suppose the dog should run away?
Dance, etc.

Then we must chain him to a post;
Dance, etc.

Build it up with stone so strong;
Dance over, my Lady Lea;
Huzza! 'twill last for ages long,
With a gay ladie."

A correspondent of the "Gentleman's Magazine" (1823) remarks that "London Bridge is broken down" is an old ballad which, more than seventy years previous, he had heard plaintively warbled by a lady who was born in the reign of Charles II, and who lived till nearly that of George II. Another correspondent of the same magazine observes, that the ballad concerning London Bridge formed, in his remembrance, part of a Christmas carol, and commenced thus :—

"Dame, get up and bake your pies,
On Christmas Day in the morning."

The requisition, he continues, goes on to the dame to prepare for the feast, and her answer is :—

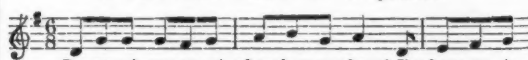
"London Bridge is broken down,
On Christmas Day in the morning."

The inference always was, that until the bridge was rebuilt, some stop would be put to the dame's operations. But why the falling of a part of London Bridge should form part of a Christmas carol, we are at a loss to determine. This connection has doubtless long since been gathered into the "wallet that Time carries at his back, wherein he puts alms for oblivion."

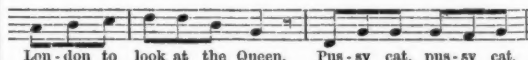
A Bristol correspondent, whose communication is inserted in that delightful volume, the "Chronicles of London Bridge," says: "About forty years ago, one moonlight night, in a street in Bristol, his attention was attracted by a dance and chorus of boys and girls, to which the words of this ballad gave measure. The breaking down of the bridge was announced as the dancers moved round in a circle, hand in hand, and the question, 'How shall we build it up again?' was chanted by the leader, whilst the rest stood still."

There is an old proverb which says that "A cat may look at a king." Whether the same adage applies equally to a female sovereign, and is referred to in the following nursery song, or whether it particularly alludes to glorious Queen Bess, is now a matter of uncertainty.

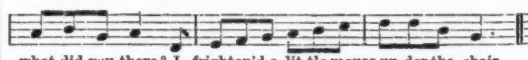
A CAT MAY LOOK AT A QUEEN.



Pus-sy cat, pus-sy cat, where have you been? I've been up to



Lon-don to look at the Queen. Pus-sy cat, pus-sy cat,



what did you there? I frighten'd a lit-tle mouse un-der the chair.

The rhyme of "Little Jack Horner" has long been appropriated to the nursery. It forms part of "The Pleasant History of Jack Horner, containing his Witty Tricks and Pleasant Pranks which he played from his youth to his riper years," a copy of which is in the Bodleian Library; and this extended story is in substance the same with "The Fryer and the Boy," 1672; and both of them again are taken

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from the more ancient story of "Jack and his Step-Dame," which may be traced back to the fifteenth century.

The first five stanzas of the ancient "merriment" of Jack Horner ran as follows:—

"Jack Horner was a pretty lad,
Near London he did dwell;
His father's heart he made full glad,
His mother loved him well.

She often sat him on her lap,
To make all smooth beneath,
And fed him with sweet sugar-pap,
Because he had no teeth.

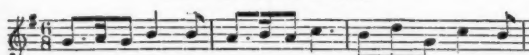
While little Jack was sweet and young,
If he by chance should cry,
His mother pretty sonnets sung,
With lulla-baby-by.

A pretty boy, a curious wit,
All people spoke in his praise;
And in the corner he would sit
On Christmas holidays.

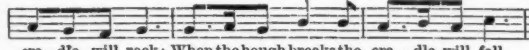
And said Jack Horner, in the corner,
Eats good Christmas pie;
With his thumbs pulls out the plumbs,
Crying, 'What a good boy was I.'

The nursery song beginning, "If all the World were Paper," may be found in the curious poetical miscellany entitled "Wit's Recreations," published in 1640, and the tune is contained in Playford's "English Dancing Master," 1650. The familiar rhyme of "Girls and Boys come out to Play" is certainly as old as the reign of Charles II; and of the same date, or older, is that commencing, "Hush-a-by, Baby, on the Tree-Top." Ritson, who gives the following version of the latter, says that the commencing words are a corruption of the French nurse's threat in the fable, *He bas là le loup!*—Hush, there's the wolf!

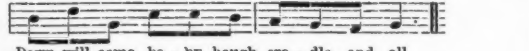
THE NURSE'S SONG.



Hush-a-by, ba-by, on the tree-top, When the wind blows the



cra-dle will rock; When the bough breaks the cra-dle will fall,



Down will come ba-by, hough, cra-dle, and all.

The well-known maxim of "Single misfortunes seldom come alone," is happily illustrated in the following:—

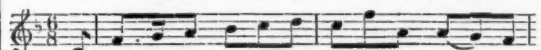
"Jack and Jill went up a hill,
To fetch a pail of water;
Jack fell down, and broke his crown,
And Jill came tumbling after."

The advantage of a diversity of tastes is also well hit off by one of our old lyrics:—

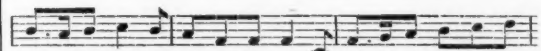
"Jack Sprat could eat no fat,
And his wife could eat no lean;
And so betwixt them both, d'ye see,
They lick'd the platter clean."

The rhyme of "The Old Woman tossed in a Blanket" is as old as the reign of James II, to which monarch it is supposed to allude. The pretty tune to which it is sung has been noted down from the singing of an ancient dame well up in traditional lore of a similar kind.

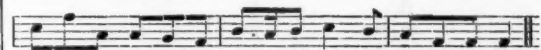
THE OLD WOMAN TOSSED IN A BLANKET.



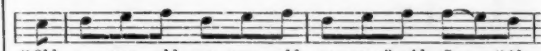
There was an old wo-man toss'd up in a blan-ket,



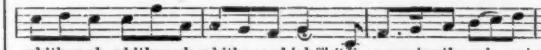
Nine-ty-nine times as high as the moon; But where she was go-ing I



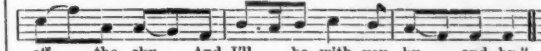
could not but ask it, For un-der her arm she carried a broom:



"Old wo-man, old wo-man, old wo-man," said I, "... Ah,



whither, ah, whither, ah, whither so high?" "I'm sweeping the cob-we's



off... the sky, .. And I'll... be with you by - - and-by."

The genealogy of many a tale and rhyme may be traced not only to France, to Spain, and to Italy, but to Greece and Rome, and at length to Persia and India. Our most familiar stories have afforded instances. The tale of Whittington and his Cat, supposed to be indigenous to our country, is narrated by Arlotto in his "Novella delle Gatte," and in his "Facetie," which were printed, soon after his death, in 1483; the tale is told of a merchant of Genoa. But going further back, we find the same story in the East. Sir William Gore Ouseley, in his travels, speaking of the origin of the name of an island in the Persian Gulf, relates, on the authority of a Persian ms., that in the tenth century one Keis, the son of a poor widow in Siráf, embarked for India, with his sole property, a cat. There he fortunately arrived at a time when the palace was so infested by mice or rats that they invaded the king's food, and persons were employed to drive them from the royal banquet. Keis produced his cat; the noxious animals soon disappeared, and magnificent rewards were bestowed on the adventurer of Siráf, who returned to that city, and afterwards, with his mother and brothers, settled in the island, which from him has been denominated "Keis," or, according to the Persians, "Keish." The story of the other puss, though without her boots, may be seen in Straparola's "Piaçevoli Notti." The familiar little hunchback of the "Arabian Nights" has been a universal favourite. It may be found everywhere—in the "Seven Wise Masters," in the "Gesta Romanorum," and in Le Grand's "Fables." The popular tale of Llywellyn's greyhound, whose grave we still visit at Bethgelert, Sir William Jones discovered in Persian tradition, and it has given rise to a proverb, "As repentant as the man who killed his greyhound." "Blue Beard," "Red Riding-hood," and "Cinderella," are tales told alike in the nurseries of England and France, Germany and Denmark; and the domestic warning to the ladybird, the chant of our earliest days, is sung by the nurse of Germany.

WEATHER PROVERBS.



January.

THE first month of our year is undoubtedly the coldest, and throughout it the cold rather increases than diminishes, as the old English proverb bears witness:—

“As the day lengthens,
So the cold strengthens.”

This statement is supported by the Italian saying, “Cresce d, cresce l freddo, dice il pescatore,” showing that the experience of two countries at a distance from each other is similar. Our ancestors always hoped for a dry and cold January, considering mild weather at this time to do far more harm than good.

“A January spring is worth naething.”

“If the grass grow in Janiveer,
It grows the worse for it all the year.”

“If January calends be summerly gay,
It will be winterly weather till the calends of May.”

According to old lore, if we have windy or warm weather in January, March and May will be chilly in return.

“March in Janiveer,
Janiveer in March, I fear.”

“A warm January, a cold May.”

So long as people take the general weather for a space of a few days as indicating the probable succeeding weather, some probability is in their favour. But when they assert that the weather on some fixed day influences those coming after, it becomes almost ludicrous. To do this was no un-

common practice in old times, and many proverbs have arisen from it. Moreover, it is often forgotten by us now that nearly all these old sayings have reference to the days of the month according to the old style of reckoning, while we have adopted for more than a century the new style. Hence, for instance, proverbs relating to Christmas and New Year's Day should be placed under January 6th and 13th respectively, if we are to be fair in examining the truth of the weather wisdom of our ancestors, and the same remark of course applies to all other days. Accordingly, the various proverbs noted in these papers have been arranged under those days in the new style which correspond to the same dates in the old style. Though this has in some cases a peculiar effect, as in taking January 6th for Christmas Day, it nevertheless is the only proper way of treating the subject. Bearing this in mind, we shall get at a true notion of the results of the experience of our ancestors. The neglect of this is a small blemish in the otherwise excellent little work on “Weather Lore,” by Mr. Richard Inwards—a book to which the author of these papers is largely indebted. The first day in January to which a proverb is attached is the 2nd (St. Thomas's Day, December 21st), and it is as follows—“Look at the weathercock on St. Thomas's Day at twelve o'clock, and see which way the wind is, for there it will stick for the next (lunar) quarter.” We next come to January 6th, which answers to Christmas, and was consequently held in much respect by weather prophets.

“Light Christmas*, light wheatsheaf;
Dark Christmas, heavy wheatsheaf.”

“If it rain much during the twelve days after Christmas, it will be a wet year.”

“If the sun shine through the apple-tree on Christmas Day, there will be an abundant crop in the following year.”

“If Christmas Day on Thursday be,
A windy winter ye shall see;
Windy weather in each week,
And hard tempest strong and thick,
The summer shall be good and dry,
Corn and beasts shall multiply;
The year is good for lands to till.”

“A windy Christmas and a calm Candlemas are signs of a good year.”

The 24th is also a marked day, if we believe the “Shepherd's Almanack” of 1676, which tells us that “if on the twelfth (24th *n.s.*) of January the sun shines, it foreshows much wind.” With this proverb ends the list of those connected with particular days in January.

ORIGINAL FABLES.

BY MRS. PROSSER.

A CROW'S WINGS FOR A CROW'S FLIGHT.

“BY-BYE, mother; I am off,” said the young tortoise to the greatly astonished old one, who was sunning herself under a lavender hedge in the kitchen-garden.

“Off!—where? What do you mean?” she asked.

* If full moon about Christmas Day.

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"Off to yonder upland pastures that shine in gold and green. Don't you see them? I am told there is the most delicious food there in wonderful abundance and variety; roots of all kinds and slugs innumerable! and, to be candid, it's very well for old folks like you, mother, but I am tired and bored to death with this dismal old garden, with its long gravel walks and box borders. I want to better myself."

"Go to those pastures, child!" cried the old tortoise, amazed beyond measure. "Why, your life would not last out such a journey. Besides, remember the difficulties, as well as the length of the way; there are walls and hedges to get over, steep hills to climb, and deep valleys to cross between this place and that."

"Oh yes!" answered the young one, flippantly; "I have taken all that into consideration. It is a good distance to travel, and no doubt I shall meet with difficulties and disagreeables; but never fear for me; the old crow who was telling me about it says she makes nothing of going there three or four times in the day."

"The old crow!" cried his mother, with a sniggering laugh. "Good now, child; just look at your feet and your figure, and the shell you have to carry. When you have a crow's feathers and wings, you may measure distance and difficulties by the rule, 'As the crow flies,' but till then remember you are but a tortoise!"

QUITE ANOTHER VIEW OF THINGS.

"Which of you caught that hare in the Withecote road?" said Grim, the watch-dog, to Charley, the Pomeranian, and Bustle, the Scotch terrier.

"I did, of course, and fine fun it was," said Charley.

"You?" exclaimed Bustle, cocking his ears fiercely. "Didn't I kill him? Can you deny that I killed him?"

"Stuff and nonsense!" said Charley, contemptuously; "I should like to know what you could have done if I hadn't caught him!"

"Like your impudence," said Bustle, bristling all over; "if I hadn't sent him right into your grip from the other side of the road he might have run to Hanover before *you'd* have caught him."

"Well, don't quarrel about it," said Grim, "the keeper will settle the question; he means, I'm told, to shoot whoever did it as a thief and a poacher, mind that!"

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Charley. "Then, Bustle, my boy, I'm very sorry for *you*; you did it, you know; you just said so."

"Not a bit of it!" cried Bustle; "*you* caught him. You were proud enough of that just now; and if you hadn't caught him I couldn't have killed him!"

"Here's the keeper coming, I hear his gun!" said Grim.

"Then please, dear Mr. Grim, to tell him I didn't kill the hare," said Charley, running for his life up the road.

"And tell him I didn't catch him, Grim!" said Bustle, making a short cut through the hedge and scampering off to the coppice.

DINNER OVER AND THE GUESTS GONE.

"Dick," said a field-mouse to a sparrow, "just look at those bushes; only a day or two back, and

they were covered with you and your friends; from morning till night I could hear you all chirping and chattering while I sat in my hole in the opposite bank. To-day it is quite bare and quite forsaken. Why is it?"

"Why?" repeated Dick; "can't you understand why? The thing speaks for itself. All the hips and haws are gone; you see that it is 'bare.' Can you ask, then, why it is forsaken?"

AN OUNCE OF HELP WORTH A POUND OF PITY.

There was a great rush to the trap, in which sat a disconsolate mouse looking in blank dismay at the company of cousins clamouring outside.

"How could you be so foolish?" squeaked one.

"It goes to my very heart to see you, dear," squeaked another; while cries of "I wonder you were not more careful!" "What a thousand pities you should have fallen a sacrifice to your taste for cheese!" "How glad I should be to see you out of your trouble!" etc., etc., rose in a chorus from the rest.

"There, if you can't do better than sit there squeaking, be so good as to go," cried the prisoner, indignantly; "if you would set to work to gnaw the wires, so as to set me free, I would call you friends, and believe in your sympathy; but your 'noise and doing nothing' is worse than useless. Your wisdom, which is aggravating, comes too late, and your pity is as contemptible to me as it is cheap to you!"

A SAVOUR OF LIFE AND A SAVOUR OF DEATH.

"How noble, how delightful is your work, oh children of glory!" cried the roses, admiringly, to the sunbeams; "wherever you come, the most fragrant odours float on the air, and all the field rejoices."

"Not 'wherever we come,'" answered the sunbeams; "look at the nauseous steam rising from yonder mass of decay, and remember that while we heighten the excellence we draw forth from you and such as you, the vile only show themselves viler under our influence."

HONESTY THE BEST POLICY.

"I wouldn't be you—no, that I wouldn't!" murmured all the little flowers on the bank to the nettle.

"Why not, pray?" demanded the nettle.

"Oh, such a character—such a shocking character! you can't be touched by the very gentlest touch of the tenderest hand without pricking and stinging and poisoning it! Fie, fie, fie!"

"Ah, that's the way people's tempers are misunderstood," said the nettle; "I do certainly prick, sting, and poison those who trifle with and tease me, but let me be seized with a bold and honest grasp, and I am as harmless as the weakest of you."

NO KINDNESS IN RAISING FALSE HOPES.

"I thought I would just give you a little cheer," said a fine sunny day that broke in on a gloomy December; "it's quite pleasant to see how bright I have made you all; the hedges are thinking of budding, and the birds are fancying that building time is at hand. You ought to feel very grateful."

"Far from it," all with one voice replied; "you come to fill us with false hopes, and to raise a joy that to-morrow will most likely destroy. This is not kindness. Come constantly, and we will bless you; come in this fickle way and you will leave us mourning over disappointment, and enervated by your

capricious geniality, so that when our hardships come they will seem to us a thousand times harder than we now feel them to be."

MUCH WANTS MORE.

A mighty river having gathered many streams into its volume, flowed into the sea. "Now," said the rocks, "thou wilt surely be satisfied!" But that evening the waves came beating on the shore, and moaning as if in the very misery of want.

Then came a torrent from the mountains that had newly burst its rocky barriers, and rushing headlong down met the waves, and for a moment increased their force. "Now thou art satisfied; thou art full, and needest no more," cried the rocks.

But the evening tide came again, and the waves sighed and moaned as piteously and wearily as ever.

"Alas!" cried the rocks, "it is even so; if all the waters of the earth were poured into thee, thou wouldst never be satisfied."

"Never be satisfied!" echo murmured from their caverns.

A BROKEN STAFF AS BAD AS NONE.

"What's the noise about?" cried Mag from her cage, as Crib was being carried across the yard to be thrashed for killing a lamb.

"Who says he did it?" she cried again.

"Oh, there's plenty of proof," said Ned, the donkey, looking over the gate; "it's a bad thing to have no character, and no one will say a word for Crib."

"I'll give him a character," cried Mag.

"Your servant, ma'am," said Ned; "but, pray, ma'am, may I ask who'll give you a character?"

Noblesse Oblige.

Noble names, if nobly borne,
Live within a nation's heart;
If of such thou beaver be,
Never let that name for thee
Point the scorn!

Shrined within its narrow bound,
Other hopes than thine have part;
For it once in life was theirs,
Who from weight of earthly cares
Peace have found!

They who wore it, free from blame,
Set on honour's splendid height,
Watch, as spirits, if its place
Love the night, or daylight's face—
Shame, or Fame!

'Tis a precious heritage,
Next to love of God, a might
That should plant thy foot, where stood
Of thy race the great and good,
All thine age!

Yet remember! 'tis a crown
That can hardly be thine own,
Till thou win it by some deed
That with glory fresh shall feed
Their renown!

Pride of lineage, pomp of power,
Heap dishonour on the drone;
He shall lose his strength who never
Uses it for fair endeavour;
Brief his hour!

—The Marquis of Lorne.

Varieties.

OMNIBUS TRAFFIC IN PARIS.—The following statistics respecting the traffic of the Paris omnibuses have been published: In 1855 the omnibuses carried 40,000,000 passengers; in 1860, 72,000,000; in 1867, Exhibition year, 121,000,000; in 1869, 119,000,000; in 1871, 78,000,000; in 1872, 111,000,000; and in 1874, over 115,000,000.

MILTON'S HOUSE IN WESTMINSTER.—The house 19, York Street, Westminster, was once Milton's, and is now, I believe, the only one of his London residences known to be extant. It is a house of many interesting associations. Here Milton lived from 1651 to 1660, when he was Latin Secretary successively to the Commonwealth Government, to Oliver Cromwell, and to Richard Cromwell; here his blindness came on; here was the brief period of his happy second marriage; here he wrote his "Defensio Secunda," some of his other pamphlets, and some of the most famous of his sonnets; and here he began his "Paradise Lost." At that time it was "a pretty garden-house in Petty France, Westminster, next door to the Lord Sendamore's, and opening into St. James's Park." The name "York Street" has supplanted the name "Petty France;" the street has long been blocked off by later buildings from all access to the park; and the house, ever since I have known it, has been poor-looking enough—the lower story turned into a kind of shop (generally vacant), and the upper floors let out in separate apartments, accessible by a dark and narrow staircase. But the degeneracy has been gradual. From 1811 onwards the house was inhabited by William Hazlitt, who rented it from Jeremy Bentham. While Bentham was the proprietor, he set up a tablet to Milton's memory near one of the upper back windows; but he also annexed what had been Milton's "garden" to the grounds of his own adjacent residence in Queen's Square Place, leaving only a strip of stone-paved area at the back of the York Street house to suggest where the garden had begun. It is from this narrow bit of walled-in yard at the back that one can see the house now in something like its original aspect. The memorial tablet to Milton can be discerned on looking up, but cannot be read.—*Professor Masson.*

SCOTCHMEN IN ENGLAND.—Your men came down seeking their fortune in the south with the tools in their hands of good sound elementary teaching; and consequently they naturally rose in almost every position they got into. I heard a story a day or two ago from a friend in Bradford about the way in which Scotchmen get on. A Scotchman lands at Bradford, and he goes to a large merchant, and he says he wants a situation. The master says, "Ah, what situation do you want?" "A porter, if you please." "Are you sure you mean porter?" "Yes," he says, "porter—to begin with." (Great laughter.) "Ah," replies the master, "yes, porter to begin with, but partner to end with. (Continued laughter and applause.) I have had three porters come down from Scotland, and all three are my partners now." (Laughter and applause.) Well, we know this state of things went on till we could stand it in the south no longer, and so we determined that we would set to work and have some kind of measure ourselves.—*Mr. Forster, M.P., Speech on receiving the freedom of the City of Edinburgh.*

LONDON CITY COMPANIES, WHAT THEY DO, AND WHAT THEY MIGHT DO, WITH SOME OF THEIR VAST WEALTH.—I should like to see a great deal of educational work done by the London Companies. I would entreat them to consider whether it is not in their power to make themselves—that which certainly they are not now—illustrious in the country by endeavouring resolutely and boldly to fulfil the purpose for which they were founded. What was the object for which those Companies were founded? Do you suppose they were founded for the purpose of having dinners once a year, once a quarter, or once a month? Do you suppose they were founded for the purpose of dealing out little sums of money to certain applicants, and then having it recorded of them how much good they have done? Nothing of the kind. Eleemosynary works are noble works—among the noblest, indeed, given to men. But to be an eleemosynary work it must be the work of an individual, and not of a company. These companies were founded for the purpose of developing the crafts, trades, or "mysteries" as they were called. They were founded for the purpose of doing the very thing which the Government of the country, out of the taxes of the country, is now called upon to do—namely, applying their energies and intelligence to secure the great object of the application of human labour to all the purposes of industry in the most economical, effective, and beautiful manner.—*Mr. Gladstone.*